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Weekly Security & Risk Report

23rd February 2022



MAST Intelligence

UK Domestic

International Incidents

Industry and SIA Updates

LAND



SEA

West Africa

Indian Ocean
Yemen, Somalia

European Waters



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Issue 320

Issue 320 of the series reviews, analyses and threat assesses the conflict-affected coastal states of Somalia and Yemen and associated waters, as well as ongoing issues facing the maritime industry in West Africa. The Mediterranean migrant crisis, security issues facing the UK and incidents affecting maritime security are also reported and analysed.

The Security and Risk Report Series focuses on

- Operational risks in areas of instability which could affect the safety of commercial and private vessels and personnel ashore and at sea.
- In country reporting on key countries where civil conflicts are directly impacting on maritime operations; and
- Reporting and analysis of incidents of terrorism, piracy and other related criminal activity.

MAST has a global reach and presence, delivering first hand, accurate and exclusive intelligence. MAST is entrenched and committed in continuing to support and promote the awareness of the very real risks that seafarers and other stakeholders face.

This Intelligence Report Series is a brief snapshot of MAST's Intelligence capabilities. MAST Intelligence specialises in providing clients with a suite of products and services, including; political and economic risk analysis, detailed port and vessel security briefs, vessel passage plans, threat and risk mitigation and travel risk management.

Working closely in conjunction with a host of experts, MAST Intelligence offers a market leading service pertaining to all maritime affairs.

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Gulf of Guinea

Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Bashir Jamoh, said the Agency is committed to continuously collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure that Nigeria attains the status of not only the hub of maritime activities in the West and Central Africa region but also a major maritime player globally.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Nine Ghanaians Arrested For Smuggling

On Feb 21st, SaharaReporters wrote that the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) had arrested nine Ghanaians for allegedly smuggling 201 bags of cannabis into Nigeria. The men, all fishermen, were arrested with the assistance of the Nigerian Navy in an intelligence-led mission.

Kidnapping: Don't outlaw ransom payment, Navy, EFCC tell Senate

At a public hearing on Terrorism Prevention Act (Amendment) Bill 2021, Rear Admiral Kennedy Egbuchulam, Director of Administration, Naval Headquarters, representing the Chief of Naval Staff, called on the government not to outlaw ransom payments. "It's suggested that the Bill could make the negotiation/proposed payment of ransom to kidnapers or terrorists to secure release of hostages subject to the prior knowledge of ONSA/ Armed Forces of Nigeria/Police for coordination. It's opined that subjecting such payment of ransom to security vetting and tracking is preferable to outright criminalization."

Investigate mass killing of Ilaje fishermen in Bayelsa, Reps urge police, Navy

Calls are growing within the Nigerian media for an

investigation into the apparent murder by pirates at sea of a number of fishermen from the Ilaje community in Bayelsa State, the Punch reported on Feb. 17th. The House of Representatives on Thursday called on the government to "investigate the mass killing and ensure that the culprits are prosecuted," adding that the government should provide relief materials for the affected Ilaje fishermen who have been adversely affected by the senseless attacks and unable to continue fishing in the interim."

Ghana: Enhanced cooperation and coordination needed to deter criminals at sea

The Acting Vice Chancellor of Ghana's Regional Maritime University, said there was a need for increased cooperation and coordination in the fight against maritime crime. Noting that kidnap for ransom was still the main threat to mariners in the Gulf of Guinea, he said: "This [current] situation has created gaps in the region's response process to the benefits of the criminals," he added. He was speaking at the launch of the new ECOWAS Concentrated Maritime Affairs and Security Course in Accra on Feb. 19th.

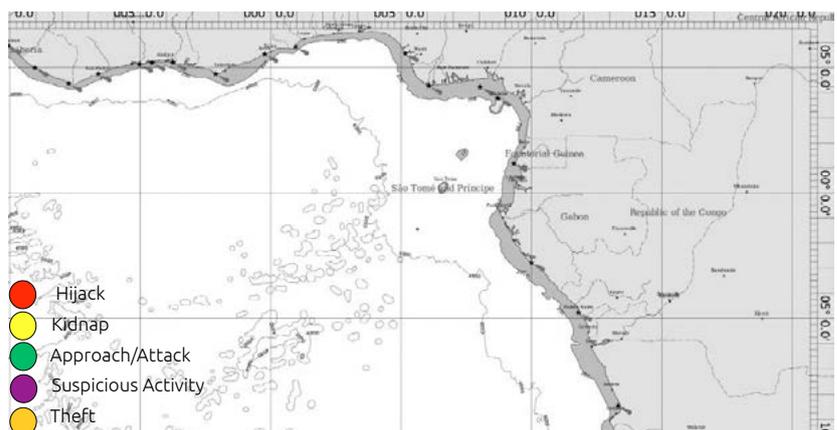
For further information, please click here.

Gulf of Guinea Piracy & Maritime Crime Figures

2022
Incidents reported: 10 (MDAT-GoG/Others)

2021
Incidents reported: 56 (MDAT-GoG/Others)
Crew kidnapped: 46 (IMB, MDAT)
Vessels hijacked: 1 (MDAT-GoG)

2020
Incidents reported: 132 (MDAT-GoG)
43 Crew Kidnapped: 130 (IMB)
Vessels Hijacked: 3 (IMB)



Indian Ocean Region

The chief of the Seychelles Defence Forces, Brigadier Michael Rosette, said his military forces are better equipped to face any activities at sea after undergoing an 11-day regional maritime exercise led by the U.S. Naval Forces Africa, a top military official said on Friday 18th, Seychelles News Agency reported.

Incidents: Nothing significant to report.

Saudi-led coalition destroys explosives-laden Houthi boat in Red Sea

Reuters reported on Feb. 18th that Saudi coalition forces had intercepted and destroyed a suspected boat bomb in the Southern Red Sea on Friday. The vessel was deployed from Hodeidah, coalition forces said.

UN reaches agreement to transfer crude from Yemen's stranded FSO Safer

After an initial agreement and then failure by Houthi forces to uphold it, the UN has reached an agreement to offload the floating storage ship Safer, YemenOnline reported on Feb. 19th. The UN has made "recent progress in efforts to resolve the Safer tanker issue, including an agreement in principle to a UN-coordinated proposal to shift the oil to another ship," Martin Griffiths said.

India, UAE agree to jointly fight terror, enhance maritime security coop

India's Economic Times reported on Feb. 19th that India and the UAE have agreed to boost maritime security in the region with greater collaboration. The news followed the India-UAE virtual summit.

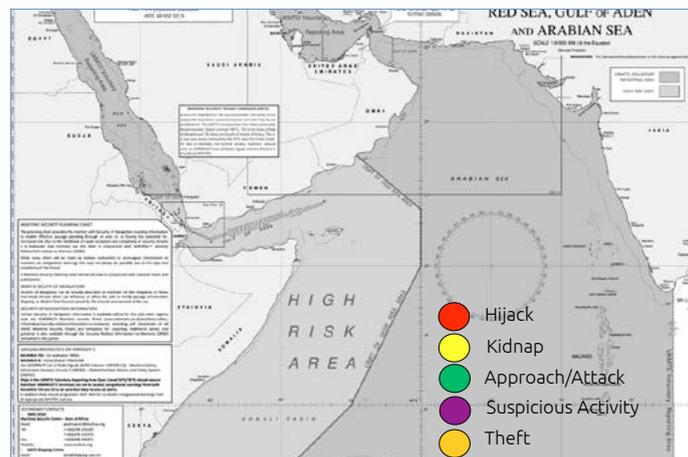
India appoints first Maritime Security Coordinator

The Hindustan Times reported on Feb. 17th that former navy vice chief, Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar, has been appointed as the country's first Maritime Security Coordinator. He will be the government's principal adviser on maritime security.

US mulls Israel-made unmanned boats to bolster Mideast operations amid Iran tensions

The Times of Israel reported on Feb. 16th that the US Navy has shown interest in Israel's unmanned surface vessel programme, as a possible addition to its fleet in the region. Following IMX 2022, reports suggest that the US could deploy Israel-made unmanned surface vessels to complement its underwater UAV operations in the region.

For further information, please click here.



MAST Note: This chart will be replaced as soon as Admiralty UK releases the updated version.

European Waters

InfoMigrants reported on Feb. 16th that the number of migrants who tried to cross irregularly into the European Union in January was up 78% compared to the same month in 2021, according to new figures released by EU border agency Frontex.

Ferry fire: Missing Euroferry Olympia passenger found alive off Corfu

One of the passengers missing aboard a ferry that caught fire near Greece on Friday has been found alive, authorities say. The Belarusian truck driver, 21, used a ladder to climb down from the ferry on to a tugboat. His first words were: "Tell me I'm alive." Hours later, fire-fighters found the first body of a missing passenger in a burnt-out lorry aboard the ship. Ten people - all thought to be lorry drivers - are still unaccounted for. The Italian-flagged Euroferry Olympia caught fire en route to the Italian port of Brindisi, BBC News reported on Feb. 20th.

Sea Watch rescues 129 migrants off Libya

German NGO Sea Watch rescued 129 migrants off the Libyan coast on Saturday, the Libya Update reported on Feb. 20th. 121 were found in one dinghy which was in distress and a further 8 people were sighted by the Sea Watch aircraft and rescued in a second operation. "On board our ship, the crew is now providing a total of 129 people with basic necessities such as medical care, food and fresh clothing," Sea Watch said.

Criminal gangs preparing for big increase in migrant journeys

The UK's Express on Feb. 19th warned that the UK government is preparing for a surge in migrant Channel crossing attempts as weather conditions begin to calm in the coming weeks. Tom Pursglove, the minister for justice and tackling illegal migration, admitted that an increase in numbers is expected in the months ahead, although there was no specific intelligence provided to support this, it is likely given the patterns observed in the Mediterranean.

Italy arrests suspected trafficker over deaths of seven migrants

The Local reported on Feb. 19th that Italian police had arrested an Egyptian believed to be responsible for trafficking a group of migrants across the Mediterranean. Some 287 people were aboard one

16 metre boat and seven lost their lives in freezing temperatures during the crossing on Jan. 25th. The suspect, identified by witnesses, had already been sentenced for people smuggling in Sicily in 2011.

Royal Navy ships patrolling Channel 'too high' to block migrant boats, minister admits

Armed Forces Minister James Heapey told LBC radio station in the UK on Feb. 17th that the freeboard of Royal Navy vessels expected to be used to patrol the Channel to look for migrants will be too high to properly rescue anyone they find. "The point is you will need additional platforms that are appropriate to the task, you need a very low outboard height to be able to safely bring people from a dinghy into your vessel."

Alderney could be used to hold Channel migrants

A UK Think Tank has proposed using Cyprus, Ascension Island or Alderney as possible asylum processing centres for migrants who cross the English Channel. The Think Tank Policy Exchange's suggestion met with a frosty response from Alderney officials. Alderney States Member, Alex Snowdon said no discussions have been had with the island's government before the news was made public, ITV News said on Feb. 17th.

For further information, please [click here](#).

Somalia & Yemen

Al Shabaab reportedly launched two attacks against civilian targets in Somalia on Saturday 19th, according to media reports. One attack, in Bosaso, killed two and left five injured, while a second suicide bombing in Beledweyne killed 13 and left 20 wounded.

Al Shabaab Collects Millions to Spend on Weapons, Report Finds

Somalia's Al Shabaab militant group has an annual budget of \$24 million to spend on purchasing weapons, a new report finds. The report by a Mogadishu-based research group, the Hiraal Institute, said the group uses various methods to procure weapons, including direct purchases from local black markets, and from arms traders contracted to buy and deliver weapons from abroad, mainly Yemen, VOA reported on Feb. 21st.

Oil deal signed, then canned with 24 hours

Just hours after Coastline Exploration announced that it had signed a deal for seven Production Sharing Agreements covering offshore, deep-water blocks off the coast of Somalia, the President and Prime Minister have announced that the deal was off. Despite a glowing announcement from the Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Abdirashid Mohamed Ahmed, the country's President Tweeted that: "it contravenes Presidential Decree 7/8/2021 which bans the inking of deals during elections so as to protect public resources from exploitation during elections," DW reported on Feb. 20th.

Insecurity, delayed polls dash Somalia's debt relief hopes

Continued delays in Somalia's election process are damaging the country, the IMF has said. According to an article in The East African on Feb. 19th, political uncertainty is impacting the process of Somalia's IMF-supported short-term financing programme and 'derailing' full debt relief. This makes it hard, the IMF says, for Somalia to access financial support. Further delays to the election process could see IMF's financial support stall.

U.S. Army Gen. Stephen Townsend, commander, U.S. Africa Command, visits Somalia

U.S. Army Gen. Stephen Townsend, commander,

U.S. Africa Command, concluded a multi-country trip to East Africa on Feb. 17th. In Mogadishu, Somalia, Townsend and U.S. Ambassador to Somalia Larry André, Jr. met with Somalia Chief of Defence Forces Brig. Gen. Odawa Yusuf Rage to discuss the counterterrorism campaign against Al Shabaab. Townsend also visited U.S. service members at forward operating locations at Kismayo and Baledogle Military Airfield.

African Development Fund approves \$4.3 million grant to Somalia

The Board of Directors of the African Development Fund has approved a \$4.3 million grant to support statistics development in Somalia. The Board of the African Development Fund, the concessional window of the African Development Bank Group, approved the grant on Feb. 14th. The Statistics Development Support Project for Somalia will entail providing technical assistance and training staff in the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics and the Statistics Departments of Hirshabelle, Galmudug and Jubaland States of Somalia.

16 Hurt as Yemen Rebel Drone Targets Saudi Airport

The destruction of a drone targeting King Abdullah Airport has left 16 injured, AFP reported on Feb. 21st. "A drone launched in the direction of King Abdullah Airport in Jazan was destroyed, with debris falling inside the airport," the coalition said, as reported by the official Saudi Press Agency.

Eight million Yemenis could lose aid next month as war rages

UN officials have warned that Yemen could lose all humanitarian aid in March unless the funds arrive, Al Jazeera reported on Feb. 16th. Nearly two thirds of aid programmes have been scaled back, they reported.

For further information, please [click here](#).

UK Security News

UK counter-terrorism officers have been in place at UK airports in recent weeks, The Guardian reported on Feb. 16th. There have been concerns that far right extremists from the UK might attempt to try to reach Ukraine, the paper reported.

Aldershot man charged with seven terrorism offences

BBC News reported on Feb. 19th that a man had been charged with terrorism offences relating to extreme right-wing ideology, police have said. Charles Cannon is accused of seven counts of possessing documents likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism. The 20-year-old from Aldershot in Hampshire was arrested following an investigation by Counter Terrorism Policing South East.

Prince Harry 'does not feel safe in UK', lawyers tell high court

Lawyers acting on behalf of Prince Harry have told the High Court that while he wants to visit the UK, he does not feel safe. The comments came during a hearing related to his claim against the Home Office decision not to allow him to pay for police protection for his family while visiting the UK, The Guardian wrote on Feb. 18th.

Lancashire far-right fanatic who had terror handbook jailed

A man who possessed a "terrorist handbook" and had an "obsession" with far-right ideologies has been jailed. Conrad Howarth, from Nelson in Lancashire, pleaded guilty to gathering terrorist material and also possessing extreme pornography. The 41-year-old was jailed at Manchester Crown Court for four-and-a-half years. Counter-terror officer Det Ch Insp Clare Devlin said right-wing terrorism "will not be tolerated", BBC News reported on Feb. 18th.

16 Year Old From Leeds Pleads Guilty To Terrorism Offences

Counter Terrorism Policing reported on Feb. 17th that a 16-year-old boy from Leeds had pleaded guilty to two offences under the Terrorism Act after being summoned to appear before Westminster Youth Court. He was formally charged today with one offence under Section 2 of the Terrorism Act (dissemination of a terrorist publication) and one

offence under Section 58 of the Terrorism Act (possession of a document or record containing information of a kind likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism).

'Eco-terrorist' who planted bomb in Edinburgh park jailed

A 35-year-old, originally from Crete, has been jailed for over eight years after he left an IED in Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh in January 2018. Police Scotland has welcomed the sentencing of Nikolaos Karvounakis. Bomb disposal experts told the court that the device, packed with 58 nails and pieces of metal pipe, would have caused significant injuries had it detonated, The Guardian reported on Feb. 16th.

London News

Two men jailed after man, 23, knifed to death

Two men have been found guilty of the murder of a 23-year-old man in 2019. Alimuz Zaman died after a 'brutal' attack in Mile End, London, the Evening Standard reported on Feb. 21st. Almal Islam and Mofizur Rahman received 22 and 24 year sentences, the paper reported.

Solicitor injected supermarket food with his own blood, court hears

A man working as a solicitor injected food products in Fulham supermarkets with his own blood, a court was told on Feb. 21st. Leoai Elghareeb had a 'bucket' of syringes containing his own blood and entered three supermarkets to infect food, the Evening Standard reported. The jury heard that 21 syringes were found, and the cost of his action was £467,000. The case continues.

For further information, please [click here](#).

Global Security News

Lawmakers in Mali have unanimously approved a plan allowing the military junta to rule for up to five years. No date has yet been set for future polls. Mali is now taking legal action to lift sanctions imposed by West Africa's monetary union, Uemoa, as it battles a debt crisis. BBC News reported on Feb. 21st.

Two held as Mozambican police seize 11 tusks

Mozambican authorities have seized 11 elephant ivory tusks from a house in the western city of Tete. Two people have been detained in connection with the case. The tusks were in a sack and weighed about 47 kilos (103 lbs) and were to be sold at about \$16 (£12) a kilo, the police said. The detained suspects have denied involvement in the crime saying they only brokered the sale, BBC News said on Feb. 21st.

Australia accuses China of shining laser at war plane

The Australian defence ministry has accused a Chinese navy ship of shining a "military grade" laser towards one of its war planes. The Chinese vessel was sailing in the Arafura Sea off northern Australia when the incident happened on Thursday 17th Feb. "Acts like this have the potential to endanger lives. We strongly condemn unprofessional and unsafe military conduct," the ministry said in a report on Feb. 21st.

US Begins Counter-terrorism Training in Africa Amid Upheaval

Reuters reported on Feb. 20th that Flintlock, the US annual counter-terrorism training programme, had begun in Ivory Coast. Over 400 soldiers from various West African military forces are expected to take part in the training. "A main focus of Flintlock is information sharing. If we can't communicate, we can't work together," said Admiral Jamie Sands, Commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, at the opening ceremony.

Mexican army moves in on drug lord's home town

The Mexican army has taken control of the hometown of a powerful drug lord in the state of Michoacán, west Mexico. Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes - known as "El Mencho" - was born in the town of Naranjo de Chila, Aguililla, and is wanted in Mexico and the US. Landmines planted by rival gangs

in the surrounding area killed one person and injured others in recent weeks. Army vehicles and landmine detection teams are patrolling the town, BBC News said on Feb 19th.

Tanzania opposition leader to stand trial on terror charges

A court in Dar es Salaam on Feb. 18th ruled that Freeman Mbowe, the leader of Tanzania's main opposition party, will have to stand trial on charges of terrorism, prolonging a case that some see as political. Mr Mbowe was arrested last July along with a number of senior officials of the Chadema party, just hours before they were to hold a public meeting to demand constitutional reforms. He was charged with financing terrorism and conspiracy. The 60-year-old leader said he had been tortured in custody, BBC News said.

Industry and SIA News

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